

Appl. No. 09/558,945  
Amdt. dated June 6, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of May 8, 2003

PATENT

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Amendments to the Claims:

Please withdraw claims 28-35 from prosecution in this application and amend claims 1, 36, and 43 as shown below.

1 1. (Currently Amended) A method of extending promotional discounts on  
2 items for sale to consumers, comprising:  
3 identifying a consumer by a unique identifier;  
4 promoting a first selected item with a discount or special price to an identified  
5 consumer;  
6 withdrawing said discount or special price to said identified consumer;  
7 granting said discount upon purchase of said item by said identified consumer  
8 prior to said withdrawing step; and  
9 holding said withdrawing step in abeyance upon an acknowledgment of said  
10 promoting step by said identified consumer.

1 2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said discount or special price  
2 comprises a free sample.

1 3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said discount or special price  
2 comprises a reduction in price for a plurality of items.

1 4. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said discount or special prices  
2 comprises points that can be accumulated and redeemed for related or unrelated items or cash in  
3 the future.

1 5. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said promoting step comprises  
2 direct mail to said identified consumer and wherein said granting step is effective when said  
3 direct mail is to reach said identified consumer.

Appl. No. 09/558,945  
Amdt. dated June 6, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of May 8, 2003

PATENT

1 6. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said promoting step comprises  
2 posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible from a kiosk  
3 at a location selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step comprises  
4 recording a visit to said kiosk by said identified consumer.

1 7. (Original) The method of claim 5 wherein said acknowledgment of said  
2 promoting step comprises passing a store loyalty card through a reader at said kiosk.

Q. 1 8. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein in response to passing said card  
2 loyalty card through said reader, said kiosk generates a printed list of inverted promotions to said  
3 identified consumer.

1 9. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said promoting step comprises  
2 posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible at a location  
3 selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step comprises scanning said item  
4 at said location by a scanning device, wherein said scanning device displays said inverted  
5 promotion of said item.

1 10. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said promoting step comprises  
2 posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible at a location  
3 selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step comprises walking past an  
4 audio device at said location with a store loyalty card, wherein said audio device voices said  
5 inverted promotion of said item.

1 11. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein said identifying step comprises  
2 identifying said consumer with a limited direct identification.

1 12. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said identifying step  
2 comprises identifying said consumer with a store loyalty card.

Appl. No. 09/558,945  
Amdt. dated June 6, 2003  
Reply to Office Action of May 8, 2003

PATENT

1 13. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said discount or special price  
2 comprises a free sample.

1 14. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said discount or special price  
2 comprises a reduction in price for a plurality of items.

1 15. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said discount or special prices  
2 comprises points that can be accumulated and redeemed for related or unrelated items or cash in  
3 the future.

Q 1 16. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said promoting step  
2 comprises direct mail to said identified consumer and wherein said granting step is effective  
3 when said direct mail is to reach said identified consumer.

1 17. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said promoting step  
2 comprises posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible  
3 from a kiosk at a location selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step  
4 comprises recording a visit to said kiosk by said identified consumer.

1 18. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said promoting step  
2 comprises posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible  
3 from a kiosk at a location selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step  
4 comprises recording a visit to said kiosk by said identified consumer.

1 19. (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said promoting step  
2 comprises posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible at  
3 a location selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step comprises scanning  
4 said item at said location by a scanning device, wherein said scanning device displays said  
5 inverted promotion of said item.

Appl. No. 09/558,945  
Amdt. dated June 6, 2003  
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PATENT

1                   20.   (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein said promoting step  
2 comprises posting a notice of said discount for said first selected item on a network accessible at  
3 a location selling said item; and said acknowledgment of said promoting step comprises walking  
4 past an audio device at said location with a store loyalty card, wherein said audio device voices  
5 said inverted promotion of said item.

1                   21.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising promoting a second  
2 selected item with a discount or special price to said identified consumer.

Q' 1                   22.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said promotion step of said  
2 second selected item is performed upon said acknowledgment of said promoting step of said first  
3 selected item by said identified consumer.

1                   23.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said identifying step  
2 comprises identifying said consumer with a limited direct identification and wherein acceptance  
3 of said second selected item requires full direct identification of said consumer.

1                   24.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said identifying step  
2 comprises identifying said consumer with a limited direct identification and wherein acceptance  
3 of said second selected item requires only limited direct identification of said consumer.

1                   25.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said identifying step  
2 comprises identifying said consumer with a full direct identification and wherein acceptance of  
3 said second selected item requires full direct identification of said consumer.

1                   26.   (Original) The method of claim 21 wherein said identifying step  
2 comprises identifying said consumer with a full direct identification and wherein acceptance of  
3 said second selected item requires only limited direct identification of said consumer.

1                   27.   (Original) The method of claim 11 wherein purchase of said first selected  
2 item by said identified consumer is by credit or debit card.

Appl. No. 09/558,945  
Amdt. dated June 6, 2003  
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PATENT

1 28 - 35. (Withdrawn)

1 36. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein said identifying,  
2 promoting, withdrawing, granting and holding steps are performed by a computer network  
3 system, and wherein said identified consumer is unable to obtain said discount upon said item  
4 prior to said withholding step due to a malfunction of said computer network system, said  
5 method further comprising:  
6 recording a price paid for said item by said consumer at a location; and  
7 granting a rebate of the difference between said recorded price and said discount  
8 at the next purchase of item by said consumer at said location.

1 37. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising  
2 providing a list of maximum possible discounts for each selected item to any  
3 identified consumer.

1 38. (Original) The method of claim 37 wherein said list is used to enforce  
2 boundaries on correct behavior of an inverted promotion system as described in claim 1.

1 39. (Original) The method of claim 37 wherein said list is used to facilitate  
2 customer service by issuing the best possible promotion given to any customer on a specific item  
3 when the system implementing the inverted promotions is not functioning.

1 40. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising organizing said  
2 inverted promotions according to a logical layout pattern

1 41. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising withholding future  
2 inverted promotions from consumers who have not received or acted upon notifications of past  
3 inverted promotions.

1 42. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising grouping a set  
2 recipients of inverted promotions to receive the same inverted promotions.

Appl. No. 09/558,945  
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PATENT

1                   43.   (Currently Amended) The method of claim 42 further comprising  
2 selectively informing different recipients of a common set of inverted promotions of specific  
3 promotions based on limited direct ~~identification~~ identification.

Q1 1                   44.   (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising accompanying said  
2 discount with additional factual information other than discounts or prices.

1                   45.   (Original) The method of claim 1 whereby said promoting step is  
2 accomplished by selecting one or more notification mechanisms based on the cost of said  
3 notification mechanisms and the customer's history of interacting with different notification  
4 mechanisms.